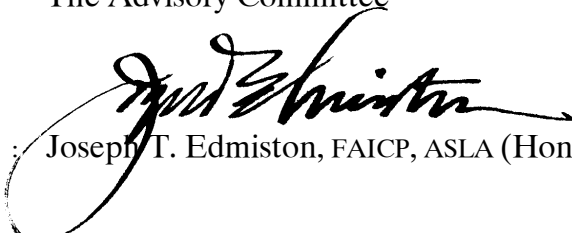


# Memorandum

To : The Conservancy  
The Advisory Committee

Date: July 9, 2007

From :  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, ASLA (Hon.), Executive Director

Subject: **Agenda Item 11(d)4: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 84 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for the protection and restoration of natural and developed resources by removal of invasive plant species, reduction of hazardous fire-fuel loads, and erosion protection. Parks operated and maintained by the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 84 grant funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for the protection and restoration of natural and developed resources by removal of invasive plant species, reduction of hazardous fire-fuel loads, and erosion protection in an amount not to exceed \$1,200,000.

Legislative Authority: Section 6500 *et seq.* of the Government Code, the Joint Exercise of Powers Act; and Section 33204(c) of the Public Resources Codes, which states in part:

The conservancy may, in accordance with the priorities of the plan, do the following: . . . (c) Award grants to state agencies, cities, counties, resource conservation districts, and park and recreation districts for the purpose of acquiring sites identified as necessary for park, recreation, or conservation purposes and for development of essential related public facilities.

Background: The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority operates and manages dozens of park sites and thousands of acres of open space located throughout Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. The protection and restoration of both natural and developed resources found on these lands can be facilitated by the systematic removal of invasive plants and restoration of native plant communities in their place. The removal of hazardous fuel-loads directly protects structures and other park features; moreover, such wildfire prevention efforts helps to protect wildlife and plant communities found in fragmented urban interface and open space areas. Erosion and watershed protection is also accomplished by restoration of native plant communities and the prevention of wildfires through the reduction of fuel loads. These actions also reduce sediment, ash, and organic matter loading of streams draining these watersheds.

Under General Obligation Law, bond funds may be used for the construction or acquisition of capital assets. "Capital assets" is defined in Section 16727(a) to include "major maintenance, reconstruction, demolition for purposes of reconstruction of facilities and retrofitting work that is ordinarily done no more often than once every 5 to 15 years or expenditures that continue or enhance the useful life of a capital asset." Also, equipment that has a useful life of more than two years is included.

Some durable equipment (life of 2 years or more) related to performing the above projects will also be purchased, amount not to exceed \$160,000. Due to the size of the project, purchasing this equipment will cost less than leasing. Equipment to be purchased will include (1) Bobcat Track Loader and attachments (or equivalent) \$65,000; (1) Bandit Brush Chipper (or equivalent) \$45,000; (1) Bobcat 2300 Utility Vehicle and attachments (or equivalent) \$19,000; (2) Deck-style brush mowers \$5,000; (1) Heavy duty equipment trailer \$10,000; and \$16,000 for small equipment such as chainsaws, weed cutters, power blowers, and related.

The execution of this grant agreement with the MRCA is contingent upon approval by the Attorney General. The total amount of the grant is not to exceed \$1,200,000. The attached application is based on recent inventories of backlogged projects. The amounts listed are illustrative; some project work may be less or more expensive than estimated and staff recommends flexibility between categories and park sites depending upon actual bids.